machines, provision of washable aprons, improved signages, extension to platforms and improvement to retiring rooms etc. were provided recently. In addition, with a view to augment the amenities, provision of stalls, extension of cover over platforms and provision of additional toilets have also been taken up.

(c) Rs. 130.00 lakh.

**Rail Accidents**

256. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of rail accidents that occurred during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of those caused due to human failure and due to failure of devices;

(c) the amount of compensation paid;

(d) the number of settlement cases pending; and

(e) the steps taken for their speedy settlement?

THE . MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Number of rail accidents occurred in past three years alongwith the reasons thereof:—

| Year | No. of Accidents | Accidents due to | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Human Failure | Failure of Devices/ Equipments |
| 1996-97 | 381 | 317 | 37 |
| 1997-98 | 396 | 329 | 38 |
| 1998-99 | 397 | 331 | 33 |

(c) An amount of Rs. 1419.23 lakhs has been paid to the

dependants of dead and injured rail passengers for train accidents happened during the last 3 years.

(d) 413 cases are pending with different benches of Railway Claims Tribunal.

(e) Following steps are being taken for speedy disposal of claims of passengers:—

I. *Administrative Action:*

(i) Instructions have been issued to all Zonal Railways that as soon as a passenger train accident or untoward incident takes place, all particulars of injured and killed may be obtained, claim application forms sent to claimants, and the record should be made available to the concerned bench of Railway Claims Tribunal.

(ii) When claims are filed and put up for hearing, the railways should give all possible assistance to the tribunal for speedy settlement.

(iii) Written Statements are to be filed by the railways in such cases within 30 days after receipt of notice from RCT.

(iv) After the decretal amount of claim has been sanctioned, railways have to ensure that cheques are issued and dispatched within a period of 15 days.

II. *Action by the Tribunal:*

(i) Top priority is given to the disposal of accident claims cases.

(ii) Circuit benches are held for time to time at stations other than headquarters of the bench for convenience of claimants.

(iii) Members from one bench are deputed to other benches wherever required due to non-availability of a member at that bench.

(iv) Requests of claimants are allowed for transfer of cases from one bench to the other near to their residence for their convenience.

(v) Adjournments are not ordinarily granted to the parties.

**Railways losses and freight Hike**

257. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 3rd February, 2000 under the caption "Cash strapped Railways may target middle class again" to cover Railway losses and to increase internal generation of funds;

(b) if so, the projected/revised losses of Railways during 1998-99 and 1999-2000 indicating profit/losses from passengers and freight charges during the first three quarters of 1999-2000; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to avoid such hike in case of middle class passenger fare?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The projected/revised estimates of losses(—)/profit(+) of passenger and goods services for 1998-99 are as under:—

(Rupees in crores)

| | Revised Estimates (1998-99) | Actual (1998-99) |
|---|---|---|
| Coaching Services | (—) 4542 | (—) 4166 |
| Goods | (+) 4911 | (+) 4813 |

The estimated profit/losses for 1999-2000 are not available.

(c) Government revises the passenger fares from time to time to contain the losses made in coaching services.